CLAIMS

I/We claim:

[c1]   1.   A method for transmitting packet types of packets, the method comprising:

receiving a packet having symbols;

identifying a packet type of the packet;

transmitting a synchronization symbol that corresponds to the identified packet type, wherein the transmitted synchronization symbol provides synchronization information and wherein each packet type has a different synchronization symbol; and

transmitting the symbols of the received packet.

[c2]   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the symbols of the packet include in-band symbols and the synchronization symbols are out-of-band symbols.

[c3]   3.   The method of claim 2 wherein the in-band symbols are transition optimized and the out-of-band synchronization symbols are not transition optimized.

[c4]   4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the synchronization symbol is transmitted before transmitting the symbols of the packet.

[c5]   5.   The method of claim 1 wherein the packet has a header with a field that indicates packet type and the identifying of the packet type includes checking the field of the header that indicates packet type.

[c6]   6.   The method of claim 1 wherein the packet types include a data packet.

[c7]   7.   The method of claim 1 wherein the packet types include a control packet.

[c8]   8.   The method of claim 1 wherein the symbols are transmitted to a switch network.

[c9]   9.   A method for identifying packet types of packets of symbols, the method comprising:

        receiving a synchronization symbol indicating a packet type, each packet type having a different synchronization symbol;

        receiving a packet of symbols; and

        indicating that the received packet of symbols has the packet type of the received synchronization symbol.

[c10]   10.   The method of claim 9 wherein the symbols of the packets include in-band symbols and the synchronization symbols are out-of-band symbols.

[c11]   11.   The method of claim 10 wherein the in-band symbols are transition optimized and the out-of-band synchronization symbols are not transition optimized.

[c12]   12.   The method of claim 9 wherein the synchronization symbol is received before the symbols of the packet are received.

[c13]   13.   The method of claim 9 wherein the packet types include a data packet.

[c14]   14.   The method of claim 9 wherein the packet types include a control packet.

[c15]   15.   The method of claim 9 wherein the symbols are received from a switch.

[c16]   16.   A communications device for transmitting packet types of packets, comprising:

        an identification component that identifies a packet type of a packet of symbols; and

        a transmission component that transmits a synchronization symbol that corresponds to the identified packet type, the transmitted synchronization symbol providing synchronization information and each packet type having a different synchronization symbol, and that transmits the symbols of the packet.

[c17]   17.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the symbols of the packet include in-band symbols and the synchronization symbols are out-of-band symbols.

[c18]   18.   The communications device of claim 17 wherein the in-band symbols are transition optimized and the out-of-band synchronization symbols are not transition optimized.

[c19]   19.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the synchronization symbol is transmitted before transmitting the symbols of the packet.

[c20]   20.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the packet has a header with a field that indicates packet type and the identification component checks the field of the header that indicates packet type.

[c21]   21.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the packet types include a data packet.

[c22]   22.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the packet types include a control packet.

[c23]   23.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the symbols are transmitted to a switch network.

[c24]   24.   The communications device of claim 16 wherein the communications device is part of a storage area network.